

# Heritage Tourism Project 2017



**Locality & choice  
of food services in  
Chiang Mai,  
Thailand**

Hanoi University

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## ABSTRACT

*Considered as one of the most crucial elements in heritage tourism, food nowadays is not only about the basic need of people's life but also an attractive tool to maintain and promote the authenticity of national culture to other friend countries. As time flies and many things evolve, it is evitable that there are several controversial ideas towards the level of locality and authenticity in restaurant management as well as in awareness of tourists. Various number of restaurants claim that they provide truly authentic experience for tourists. However, the perceptions of their customers vary from positive opinions to negative ones based on several criteria: ingredients, decorations, range of products, locality of staffs, etc. Thus, the purpose of this project is to explore the role of authenticity and locality in restaurant management by researching some statistical data obtained. Furthermore, this paper also provides some recommendations which come from researchers' points of view. Hopefully will this paper be useful for some authorities who are looking for better quality in providing authenticity and locality to their customers.*

## **PART 1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **I. Authenticity and locality and categories in food culture**

Travelling is now one of the trendiest activities all over the world, every traveler looks for knowledge and experiences. They want to find out the culture, people or life of each destination and food is not an exception. Food culture is the thing expressing the highlight of local culture, from experiencing the local food or cooking styles, visitors can learn about the history and lifestyle of local residents. It is therefore essential to define and promote the local dimension of food even where this is subsequently globalized.

As stated above, food culture is an essential aspect in tourism development, thus, locality and authenticity are key elements to shape the destination culture. The concept of authority in food experiences is often link to notions of the locality and novelty (OECD, 2012). For the tourism destinations, this link is really important, because it is supposed that the certain food can be only experienced the best at specific places. Thus, Authenticity not only creates the satisfaction but the motivation as well. Moreover, for tourist objects, authenticity should be interactive and subjected-involved instead of on- way. Food culture expresses negotiated authenticity, learned authenticity, replicable authenticity and customized authenticity. These things linked with food culture authenticity of constructivism that will affect the perceived results of authenticity. The reason is that food culture at the destination can change the taste to suite customer's taste, it is also called trans local production of food focusing on the customer's perception of authenticity. Moreover, food culture is not static, the improvement need to be made appropriately based on local market demand; generally, food culture is an ongoing continuous construction. Beside authenticity, locality is one of the crucial elements affecting restaurants in running businesses. In the context of humanistic geography, place is defined as a "perceived value center", and the carrier of cultural and social significance. Locality plays the key role in distinguishing one place to another, "when one place establishes functional contact with the outside world, the internal condition it has, which is not possessed by other places, is locality". Therefore, the meaning of the place created by people is locality and it is the discovery of uniqueness of local culture. Keeping authenticity and locality in running restaurant businesses is necessary in sustainable

food culture at the destination. In addition, food culture is precipitated and accumulated from local culture, its cultural heritage is more perceivable and recognizable than other non-material culture. Therefore, it is important to keep the excellent folk culture and developing sustainability of food culture is essential to improve and promote the local as well as national economy. Understanding this situation, restaurant owners should keep the authenticity and locality and start from traditional food culture to shape their own value. As a result, restaurant owners should look for the appropriate supply chain both ingredients and labor supplies. (Mitchell D, 1995)

## **II. Role of local community in restaurant business**

### **1. Involvement in Food and Ingredient Supplies**

A supply chain methodology which covers the linkages between relevant supply chain factors. The direct and indirect relationships between producers and consumers are central to the supply chains of locally produced food(Ari, 2010). According to the result from Ari's study (2010), food supply chains consider as a combination of environmental, social and economic sectors. The main phases of the supply chain of locally produced food are production, refining, transport, retail and consumption. The production phase consists of all agricultural processes and farm activities conducted by the producers.

Because food and beverage plays an indispensable part in tourism, it makes large profit each year especially the local factors are considered as important dimension to attract tourists and investment from restaurant business. A restaurant also is a buffer between the consumer and food they consume. It is responsible for where the food comes from and how it is prepared, when a restaurant set the criteria such as locality, authenticity, they tend to import local food supply chain to match their objectives. They also enhance the authenticity, traditional culture of region where they located to customers to make differences from their competitors. Therefore, the restaurants would like to create the harmony between their company's culture with local authentic that support their success in restaurant business. According to Pirog and Genjamin (2003), food production locality has been defined by "food miles." The importance of food miles, "the distance food travels from where it is grown to where it is ultimately purchased or consumed by the end user". With food and fuel costs increasing significantly, restaurants and other food service supply chain participants are looking for opportunities to increase their

profitability. If there is a strong demand for restaurant menu items prepared from locally produced ingredients and the local producers of these ingredients can provide a consistent supply of fresh products at reasonable prices (Thilmany, 2004), a coordinated effort to promote locally grown products can boost profitability of all supply chain partners involved in producing these meals.

## **2. Involvement in Labor Supplies**

A key characteristic of local supply chain is that meet the employment demand for restaurants. According to a research about the supply chain approaches, Terry and his colleagues (Oct,2010) mentioned that local workers help to connect the local culture with food consumers. They are not only make professional service but also translators to transfer information permits restaurant's products and service to be differentiate, enhance the image of their hometown, preserve the authenticity in food. Moreover, customers can gain knowledge, make aware of local value, experience also perceived pictures (Terry, 2010). In another study, Welter (2010) figured out that local community and restaurants have closed relationship. It is clear that restaurants recruits people in variety of positions from dishwashers, cleaners, waiters to managers, etc and they affect to customers of restaurants. In the article 'The importance of local cuisine' (Jan 2017), the author said that being served by local people makes customers, especially foreign tourists feel more "genuine" in terms of service and atmosphere, for example, local chefs have the advantage of knowing the dish well and sometimes have their own recipe to make the food have unique and authentic taste.

## **3. Authenticity and Locality Factor in Customer's Choice of Restaurant**

When choosing restaurant, especially in a tourism destination, people often based on some criteria: price, food quality, service, decoration and atmosphere... However, the locality in restaurant is more and more concerned by customers.

A research about Local Food Preferences of Restaurant Consumers pointed out that there are some main factors affecting customers' choice of restaurant. Local ingredients make up 23%, rank third among 3 options. The others include Meal price (58.5%) and Restaurant type (17.5%). Increasingly consumers are concerned with understanding the food marketing system and knowing where their food has originated. Locality, especially local ingredient is affecting

customers' perception. The awareness of the support for local people in the destination is gradually increasing. When using local cuisine, it supports local artisans and businessmen. Buying local ingredients is buying from local farmers growing their local businesses. Buying local and supporting local businesses improves local economies, which means profit runs directly into local people's pocket (chef Luis,2017).

Moreover, food is always in the best condition with high quality and freshness. The only way to get the freshest ingredients is to be close to the source. Ingredients play an important part in the taste of food, beside cook's skills and experience. The fresher, the better. Therefore, reducing food miles is necessary to restaurants and their customers.

Another important thing is that customers will learn more about seasonal foods. People may wonder why do restaurants need to change their menus once or even twice a year? It's because they're dedicated to providing their diners with the freshest ingredients that changes every season. With new ingredients entering the restaurant, every meal is an exploration of new tastes and smells of the destination. Plus, new ingredients keep chefs engaged, excited, and willing to think about food and cooking in new ways.

Besides, the concept of the restaurant built by the owner is also an important factor. For instance, when coming to Vietnam, eating in small shops located deep inside a small, dark alley is a must. It is the same for food stalls inside small trucks in Korea. Although not being obvious, local staffs indirectly affect customers' experience when dining in a restaurant.

## **PART 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1. Population and sample**

The aim of our project is to explore the role of authenticity and locality in restaurant management, so that the population of 100 tourists were identified. Subsequently, we selected a qualified sample of 85 tourists travelling to Chiang Mai to participate in this project.

### **2. Questionnaire design**

This questionnaire is divided into two parts. Firstly, ten questions were established to collect data about their behavior and their real experience toward the authenticity and locality in a specific restaurant that they choose during their trip. Secondly, we designed several questions involved in personal detail about identification of participants. In this section, we request each tourists provide their personal information including nationality, gender, age group and their highest level of education.

The very two first questions are aimed at finding out tourists' travelling behaviors including if this is the first time they come to the destination and how long they will spend here. The next three questions concentrated on the behavior, consideration level of tourists when they choose a place to eat during their trip. To learn the most preferred sources which provide tourists information about where to eat, the two following questions were drawn in the questionnaire. In order to figure out whether the chosen restaurant satisfy tourists or not, the next questions was raised. Moreover, the two up-coming questions pointed out some relevant aspects which directly present the performance of the restaurant in term of level of authenticity. And the last four questions, we required tourists to provide us some information about their demographic factors.

### **3. Sample size**

In fact, the accurate number of tourists in Chiang Mai are unable to identify. The huge population as well as the limitation of members and a short-lived time to conduct this project, finally it is ideal choice with a sample of 85 participants. This number for sample size seems to be an applicable and feasible. We think the sample size is large enough to ensure a fairly accurate result and represent about population characteristics very well.

The sample questions are presented in Appendix of this project.

#### **4. Data collection**

With a huge advantage to access directly to the real fields, we tried to deliver the hard copies of the questionnaire to the 100 selected respondents in each countries. We made efforts in approaching tourists in several destinations, from famous tourism attractions to some sites that we came across.

#### **5. Data processing**

After collecting all the responses from questionnaire, we can comfortably take information for drawing appropriate charts and tables thanks to assistance of several function in SPSS Statistics software. Based on statistic figures calculated and correlation recorded, our group made analysis, comparisons and conclusions which were shown in Descriptive results and findings section.

## **PART 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **I. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1. Overview about Thai Cuisine**

It is no doubt that Thailand culinary is among one of the most glamorous cuisines all over the world. According to Thailand's Tourism and Sports Minister, Mr. Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, in 2015, food tourism contributed more than THB455 billion to this country, accounting for nearly 20% of overall tourism revenue (Wattanavrangkul 2015). It is such an enduring effort that Thai people can nurture and preserve their subtle traditional cuisines.

The balance in flavors, colors and spice are the dominant factors that can be acknowledged in each Thai dish. Being influenced by its four neighbors Arab, Indian, Malay and Chinese, Thai cuisine is a master in spicy, sour and sweet usage (Chiang Mai n.d.). People often misunderstand that Thai food is all about spicy aspect; however, it focuses more on the balance of the three flavors named above. Therefore, a large number of fresh plants, herbs and fermented fish sauce are used in mostly every dish to create a harmonious combination of taste as well as texture and color (Amazing Thailand n.d.). Their most favorite ingredients and seasonings are garlic, galangal, basil, coriander, lemon grass, shallots, pepper and chilies for spicy taste; palm sugar and coconut for sweet; fish sauce and shrimp paste for salty while lime and tamarind for sour highlight (Chiang Mai 2016). According to Mc Dang, a Thai food expert, Thai cuisine is an intricate combination not only about flavor but also appearance, smell and medical benefit (Svasti 2010).

The second feature for authentic Thai food is Khao /ข้าว/ (Rice). This kind of food is nationally considered as the heart of food. It is an indispensable element in every single meal, served with general food in various ways (Chiang Mai 2016). Hence, "rice" has the same pronunciation as "food" in Thai, supporting the crucial position of rice in Thai's life. Jasmine Rice is the king in this "world's largest exporter of rice" country, which is famous for the sweet unique smell and its charming white when steamed (Amazing Thailand n.d.).

Thailand is divided into four main regions of the country, corresponding to four regional cuisines characteristics. Due to the topic of this project, this secondary research will just focus on the

north of Thailand cuisine, where the elegant Chiang Mai city is located. The cuisine of this region has many similarities with the one in Burma and China and is slightly different from the other parts of Thai. There are wide ranges of stunning dishes in the north and those below are seven out of the best dishes that people must definitely try once travelling to Chiang Mai (Smith n.d.).

### ❖ Chiang Mai's Traditional Dishes

#### ✚ *Khao Soi* \ ข้าวซอย \ (*Egg Noodle Curry*) and Other Well-known Curry Dishes



This national dish is the most well-known one in here. There is no way to show that you are in Chiang Mai more than taking a picture of this rich and savory yellow curry noodle soup as Khao Soi can be found anywhere in this city. For a full taste, it is recommended to use Khao Soi with some served side dishes such as spring onions, pickled cabbage and slices of lime. The noodles are mainly boiled in flat form, which is covered by a little crisply fried noodles perched on top and some slice of meat chosen from beef, chicken or pork (Smith n.d.). Apart from this best of the best Northern Thai's curry, there are loads of different curry dishes offering customers with wide range of taste such as Khanom Jeen Nam Ngeow \ ขนมจีนน้ำเงี้ยว \ (Rice Vermicelli with Soybean Curry), Gaeng Hang Lay \ แกงฮังเล \ (Burmese-style Sweet Curry), Gaeng Hoh (Mixed Curry) and so on.

#### ✚ *Khao Niew* \ ข้าวเหนียว \ (*Sticky Rice*) and *Nam Phrik* \ น้ำพริก \ (*Chilli Dip*)

Unlike most of other parts in Thai, North people prefer Khao Niew more than plain rice. After being soaked in the water and boiled with some special herbs in wooden bamboo, it is kept in

small baskets and ready to be served. Bowl is not necessary as it supposes to be eaten with bare hands by taking a small lump, pressing it until it is flat enough to hold other food inside like a spoon. It is usually served with some spicy paste, normally called Nam Phrik (Chiang Mai n.d.). The two most famous ones are Nam Phrik Ong \น้ำพริกอ่อน\ and Nam Phrik Nume \น้ำพริกหนุ่ม\, which are widely known as Red and Green Chilli Dip. While Nam Phrik Nume has the outstanding spicy flavor from various roasted herbs such as green chilies, onion and garlic, Nam Phrik Ong flavors more balance among sour, spicy and sweet due to its ingredients including ground pork, tomato and chili paste. Besides Khao Niew, Nam Phrik are served with vegetables and pork cracklings as well (Chamrat 2007).

✚ **Sai Oua** \ไส้อั่ว\ (*Grilled Herb Sausage*)



This is the dish that appears in most restaurants and vendor stalls. Sai Oua functions as the starter of a meal, made from ground pork, dried chilies, garlic, shallots and a range of pungent herbs and spices. Northern Sai Oua is a little bit different from the sausage coming from Northeastern-style sausage. More herbal aromas as well as chilies are used and it also has more meaty flavor. In some food stalls, it offers a various level of spicy added in Sai Oua so that it can fit personal taste (Smith n.d).

✚ **Larb Kua** \ลาบคั่ว\ (*Pan-fried Spicy Meat Salad*)

It can be easily seen that Thai people are fond of fresh vegetables as they appears a lot in their cuisine. Larb Kua \ลาบคั่ว\ is a kind of Pan-fried Spicy Meat Salad, which origins in Laos but it is the north of Thailand that the world knows about the existence of this delicious dish. Besides the

majority of diverse vegetables in Larb Kua, pork blood, liver and skin are also indispensable ingredients to make this juicy salad. After all of the elements are pan-fried properly, the cook will add some spices to enhance the regional taste characteristics such as cinnamon, star anise, long pepper, cumin and many more (Masanga 2016).

✚ ***Tam Khanun*** |ตำขามุน| (***Spicy Jackfruit Salad***)

This Spicy Jackfruit Salad is another dish that the main ingredient is also a kind of vegetable – jackfruit. Jackfruit contains loads of vitamin and minerals so that Tam Khanun is extremely nutritious. Before mixing with the other stir-frying herbs like garlic, tomatoes and kaffir lime leaves, the jackfruit is boiled with chili paste to absorb the full taste of spice, along with coriander and spring onions (Chamrat 2007)

✚ ***Khantoke Dinner*** |ขันโตก |

Khantoke Dinner is the most significant way to experience as much Lanna food as possible in one dish. This kind of dining provides tourists not only traditional food but also slices of local culture that Thai people have been protecting for many years. Including some northern side dishes and a small basket of sticky rice, Khantoke is served in a low teak tray where tourists sit on the floor and dig in with one hand. Thanks to the development of tourism, people can now also experience cultural performances such as folk music, fingernail dance and tribal dances while enjoying the dinner (Smith n.d.).

✚ ***Miang Kham*** |มี่ยงคำ| (***Bite-sized Wrapped Snacks***)

Bite-sized Wrapped Snacks is a well-known starter dish in the north of Thailand. Although each portion is just one bite-sized, this appetizer creates a full combination of different flavors from spicy (due to ginger and Thai chilis), sour (due to lime segments) to salty (due to shrimp paste-based sauce) and also rich and sweet (nutty toasted peanuts and coconut). They are all wrapped in a slightly bitter leaf, big enough to boost customer's tastebuds for the rest of the meal (Rachel 2014).

## **2. Role of local community in restaurant business**

### ***a. Involvement in Food and Ingredient Supplies***

Although most Thai dishes have been wide known for strong and spicy taste, each region still preserves and promotes its own authenticity as well as locality through distinct ingredients, recipes or the way of serving. Chiang Mai – representing for the Northern Part in Thailand – has done it best by exploiting the available well-off agricultural product sources, making a blend of both local and Burmese tastes which can not be confused to those in other regions.

Under its tranquility weather and prosperous Ping River, with nearly 15% out of total area in Chiang Mai classified as agricultural land (Royal Forest Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment 2013), this long historical cultivated region blesses its residents a profuse source of rice, big hauls of fish, fresh vegetables and herbs – imperative elements for spicy flavors - all year round. Recognizing this potential, the number of restaurants turning to their local neighbors for fresh, flavorful foods seems not to slow down.

For years, local foods have found their way to all kinds of different restaurants, from fine dining to casual sandwich - coffee shops, appearing on normal street food stalls to even such luxury dishes. The reasons are diversified, but the first one to name is that the local foods and ingredients are fresher and taste better for “they travel a fraction of distance and still maintain their original appearance, tastes, nutrient without using any bioengineering” (Lorri 2016). Besides, the ingredients evoke special sense and feeling due to the scarcity as well as peculiarity cultivated only in this region’s land.

In Chiang Mai, organic farms spring up every year in the suburb area, especially in valleys, being not only tourist preferable destinations but also the main fresh and clean sources of vegetable and ingredients. Some famous ones can be named are Mindful Farm (Samoeng, 75 km north-west of the Chiang Mai) growing more than 50 kinds of local vegetables and fruits, Phrao Organic Farm (Wiang, Phrao, 100 kilometers north of Chiang Mai) growing a wide variety of tropical fruits including guava, rose apple, longan, passion fruit, papaya, mango, and so on, and others - Daradalay Banndin Farm (Ping Khong, Chiang Dao) or Baan Hom Samunphrai (Tawangtan, Saraphi). Beside, this city is also well known for large orange farms (Thanatorn, Amornmit,...) providing the special kind of orange which is preferably chosen in lots of

restaurants. Meanwhile, some farms such as Ginger Farm or farm villages open restaurant in their own area, serving mainly Authentic Thai Food with “ingredients sourced locally or grown in our own garden” – stated by the representatives of Ginger Farm. For those who do not have contract directly with farms or specialized villages (such as Tong Luang Village), there are still hundred small to medium scattered and market food vendors in and out city center selling food and ingredients as intermediaries namely Muang Mai Market (Wang Singkham Road) providing “huge variety of fresh fruit and vegetables as well as seafood and meat ready to head off to many of Chiang Mai’s restaurants” (Sarah 2014) or Ton Lan Yai Market (Chang Moi and Praisani Road) offering fresh meat and veggies and dried food. Even such big and famous Anchan Vegetarian Restaurant is celebrated for its flavorsome curries with homemade pastes derived from potatoes and the majority of curry pastes from local markets containing shrimp or fish. Whatever sources are chosen, these restaurants have one priority in common – local fresh ingredients for fresher and better dishes’ taste.

#### ***b. Involvement in Labor Supplies***

The images of this old city are not just hidden in distinct culinary, but present in the restaurant’s people including its chefs, waiters, waitress or anyone working here. Wandering around any local restaurant, it is not hard to catch a sight of young Thai waiters or waitress welcoming customers in traditional language, or even in some simple English words. In Chiang Mai, lots of restaurants are run by local families and local people, many of which may be small, but customers have chance to be warmly welcomed, introduced about the traditional dishes and even taught how to cook them in details by restaurant’s owner. This brings customers fantastic moments in their short trip stepping in this land.

In restaurants, especially one serving traditional dishes, local chefs are indispensable factors. They are full of knowledge about Northern Thailand food and know how to make dishes splendid with unique recipe passed through the "generations", historical cooking techniques or food presentation. According to Chef Andy Richer (2014), who is specialized in authentic Thai food, “Chiang Mai lies in a mountainous and jungly region; there is also lots of freshwater fish and domesticated animal; therefore, the old-school, traditional food tends to be herbaceous and brothy”. Sometimes, they adjust a little bit in recipe to reduce the spicy and make cuisines more suitable for the customers’ taste and stomach.

Above all, beside unique blend of aromatic spices and fresh ingredients, the authenticity and locality remains in people factor, which bring the soul deep inside every simple-to-complex design. Now that customers enjoy their dishes not just through flavors but also the feeling when touching the life of local people.

*c. Authenticity and Locality Factor in Customer's Choice of Restaurant*

In a research about “Tourists Attitudes Towards Regional and Local Foods” conducted by Enteleca Research and Consultancy Company, generally more than 70% of people take an interest in local foods during their travelling. The vast majority of these people are not actively seeking out local foods but are happy to try when they come across. The similar scenario can be seen in Chiang Mai when annually researches carried out on tourists have shown the nearly high number. Also stated above, tourists tend to seek for authenticity and locality in local restaurants, not mention to the size is big or not, provided that they meet some particular criteria such as fresh food in season or secret recipe. By enjoying the food made from local ingredients, customers easily get the feelings that they are Thai people in their daily life.

Many managers or owners even modify and design their restaurants in traditional style as a way of making impression right at the first sight. The Gallery (Charoen Rat Road, Chiang Mai) is a small local restaurant featuring an art gallery showcasing work created by local artisans, including paintings, sculptures and carvings. Khum Kaew Palace Khantoke (Phra Pokklao Road, Chiang Mai,) presents distinguished style belonging to 13th - 18th centuries and enchanting performances of traditional Lanna dance and music through the meal. Another example one is The Whole Earth (Sri Donchai Road, Changklan, Muang Chiang Mai), which is originally founded on the concept of transcendental meditation and eating for enlightenment, This restaurant is housed within an old teak Thai-style house, complete with a beautiful garden area and considered as a spiritual revenue. These are just some of a number of places where local architectural style influences directly to customers' perception.

In general, the concept of authenticity and locality is exploited in many dimensions, but mostly in the way restaurants use local ingredient, local food and create the soul of region through architecture as well as local residents' involvement. In another look, this also shapes region's culinary tourism.

## II. PRIMARY RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 1. In-depth interview findings

So as to understand more intensely about the service's locality and authenticity management of local restaurant in Chiang Mai, we were arranged to have a 15-minute interview with Mr Manop – the employee at a well-known Northern Thai food restaurant in Chiang Mai named Tong Tem Toh. With the valuable help with translation job from Parn – a Thailand's member of this project, some on-field findings were drawn to support our limitation in literature review.



According to Mr Manop, the name Tong Tem Toh was the combination of the owner's name (Tong) and the iconic feature of the restaurant "full-table" (Tem Toh). To be more specific, the food will be served full-table with various dishes as a special feature of local Lanna style. (Manop 2017)



The history and origin of the restaurant also play a crucial role in determining the authenticity of the restaurant. It was dated back to 7 years ago, when it was transformed from a local homestay/guest house to the Northern Thai food restaurant nowadays. The architecture design was not changed so much as the origin; hence, it can be said that the restaurant's environment is truly authentic. Not only the design but the decoration and amenities should also provide authentic feeling for customers. Tong Tem Toh opens daily from 7 am to 9 pm. In daytime, people can take advantage of the natural light; while in the evening, it requires to have lighting system for the business to run normally. Instead of modern light bulbs, lanterns are effectively used as the main source of light to fit with the local theme. However, with our own experience, there is one disadvantage: the light is not really bright enough in the nighttime.



The menu was kept unchanged since the first day the restaurant was established. No dishes are added because its main value is providing truly local Northern Thai food. Therefore, they continue to stick with a stable menu but not try to diversify it. Some best-sellers can be named such as Lanna sausage, skin pork, prik num sauce paste, etc.

All of the ingredients are taken daily from the local fresh markets: Miang Mai market and Tom Payon market. Tong Tem Toh has various local suppliers in those two markets to provide them the highest ingredient quality. Another reason why they have different partners is to assure the availability of ingredients for their dishes. There are more than 500 tourists coming here daily, mostly is Chinese tourists, which means a large amount of ingredients should be stored and ready-to-use. In spite of the various suppliers, it still suffers from shortage of Pak Woan, the most favored local vegetable that can only grow in summer time. Among restaurant and

suppliers, there are no guarantees about the hygiene factors but by asking employees to go and choose things by themselves, the restaurant can control the freshness of the raw ingredients. “It’s fresh. It’s convenient and it’s cheaper than the one in supermarket.” – Manop said. Locality factor was not mentioned.

About the employees, according to Mr Manop, all of people working here, from part-time to full-time employees, are the local. They appreciate the locality involvement in their business as they want to create an authentic experience for customers as well as local is the main source of employee here. The main chef of Tong Tem Toh comes from a native tribe in Northern Thailand. Therefore, all of his recipes follow the original way of cooking, providing tourists the most authentic taste of Lanna food. In many cases, for some tourists who cannot eat spice, the level of spice will be adjusted a little bit, compared to the authentic version, to fit with each customer. However, there are some certain dishes that it is unable to change such as Lanna sausage, which they bought directly from local market.



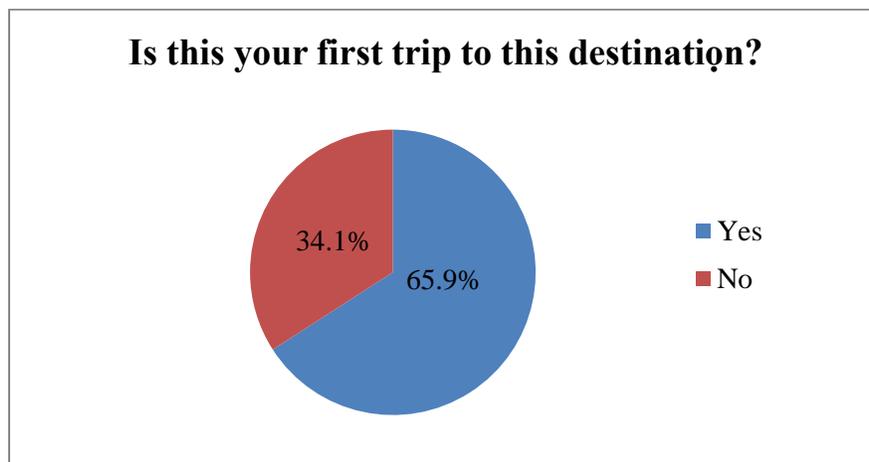
Besides his main cooking function, he also collaborates with the manager to train the staffs. Employees will be trained from A to Z how to serve, how to prepare dishes, how to cook like Northern Thai style. After the staffs gain some specific standard, the employer may now reduce the number of process check to empower employees to do their jobs by themselves. The manager will only show up if there is problem arises.



In some special occasions in Thailand like Songkran festival or New Year, it is interesting that the restaurant don't take any action to attract customers like running some sale-off or changing the ways of decoration to fit with the occasion. To communicate with their customers, they have a Facebook fanpage, where they can collect some of customers' feedbacks to improve the service later. Because the main characteristic of the restaurant is to provide "full-table" of local Northern cuisine, the customers must come to the restaurant to enjoy the meal as Tong Tem Toh don't provide shipping service. Everything needs to be maintained in the traditional way.

## 2. Descriptive results and findings

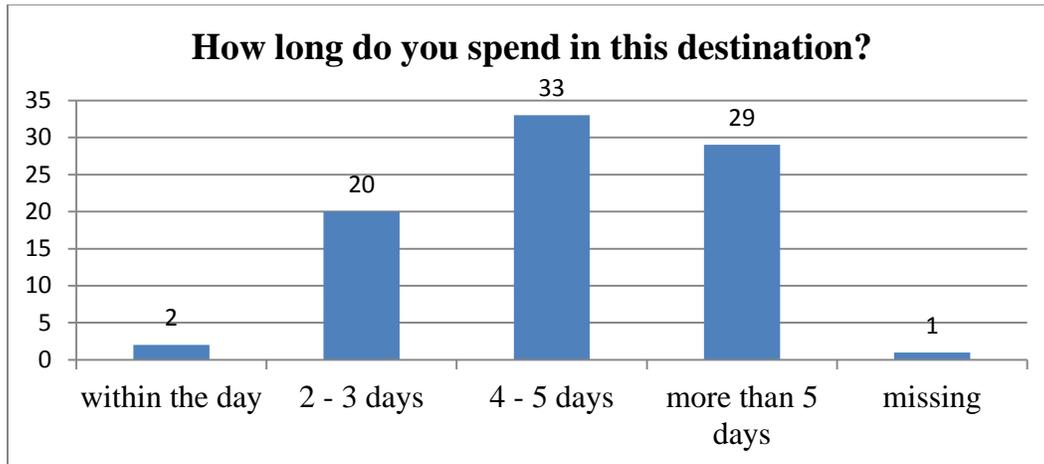
### Question 1:



The pie chart above illustrates the number of visitors, who were experiencing their first trip to Chiang Mai. It can be clearly seen that a majority of responders, who were questioned, chose the

answer – “Yes” with 56 tourists, accounting for 65.9 percent of the total. Meanwhile, the other randomly selected had travelled to this city before, making up 34.1 percent of the overall with 29 people. In short, for most tourists, this was their first travelling experience to Chiang Mai.

**Question 2:**

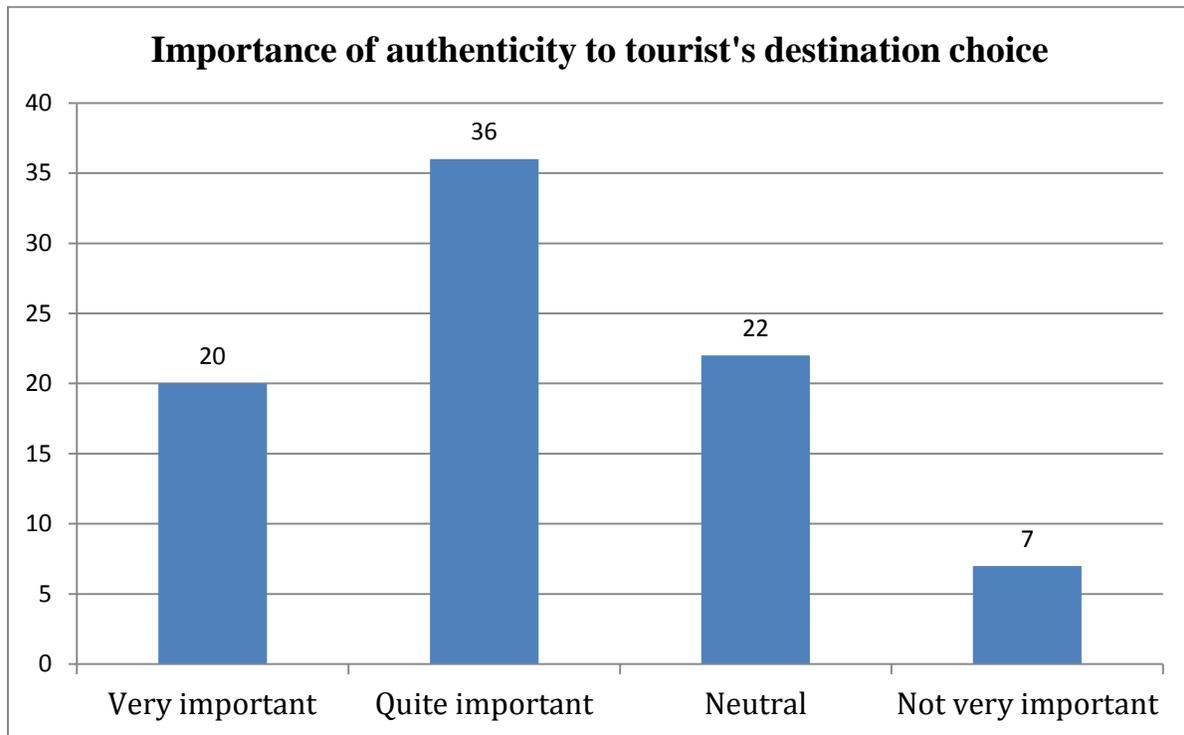


The bar chart given shows the length of time that tourists would like to stay in Chiang Mai. Of 85 tourists in total, most of them wished to stay from four to five days, constituting 33 visitors. Meanwhile, the figure of respondents would love to enjoy this city from two to three days and more than 5 days accounted for 20 and 29 people respectively. Within a day visit witnessed the smallest number, reporting for only 2 votes. In general, tourists preferred spending an average number of days to explore Chiang Mai city.

**Question 3: Can you name some local food of the destination?**

In order to perceive the interest of tourists toward some specific local dishes, a question was raised “Can you name some local food of the destination?”. There were a large number of visitors, who could literally suggested some local food, constituting three-fifths of the total 86 respondents (51 replies). Within this group, a wide range of Chiang Mai’ famous dishes could be significantly named such as Pad Thai, Khao Soi, Son Tom, Crispy Pork, in which Pad Thai and Khao Soy appeared the most frequently. In the whole, it can be seen that tourists had some basic information about local cuisine.

**Question 4: When you choose a place to eat during your trip, how important is the authenticity/locality of the destination for your choice?**



Illustrated in the bar chart above are the opinions of visitors toward the importance of the authenticity to their destination choices. Overall, a large number of respondents pointed out that it was quite crucial for their restaurants to be authentic with 36 votes. Looking at the details, the number of respondents who seriously took authenticity as one of the factors to choose restaurant and those who were neutral have slightly different proportions, reporting for twenty and twenty-two votes respectively. Last but not least, it can be seen that there were only seven tourists representing for the idea authenticity was not that important to their decisions. Overall, the majority agreed that authenticity played an important role in their destination's choice.

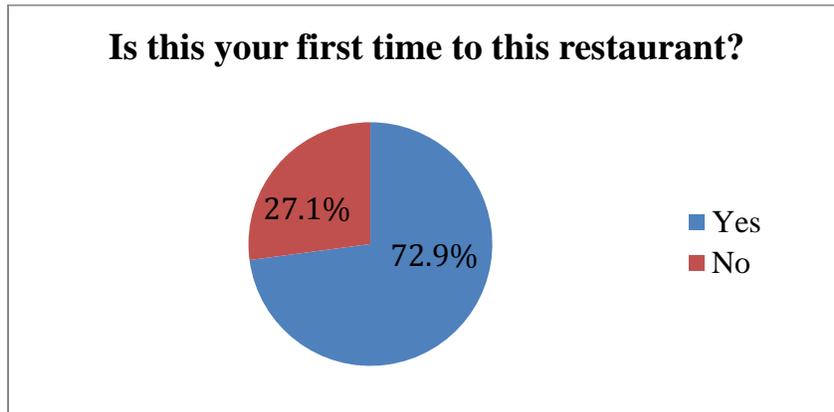
**Question 5: How important are the following criteria toward your choice of a place to eat during your trip?**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The restaurants provide local food	85	1	5	2,24	,984
local products ingredients	85	1	5	2,26	1,104
Traditional recipe	85	1	5	2,38	,988
traditional eating style	85	1	5	2,75	1,045
local serving staff	84	1	5	2,57	1,195
local chef team	84	1	5	2,37	1,039
local design decoration	84	1	5	2,43	1,165
Valid N (listwise)	82				

After applying descriptive method in processing statistic, a table was made in order to perceive the factors that influent individuals' choice of a place to eat throughout Chiang Mai visit. With the means all around 2.25 to 2.75 for every seven factors, it can be seen that on average, tourists tended to show a fairly concern about authenticity issue, especially the factors whether the restaurant provide local food and use traditional recipe or not.

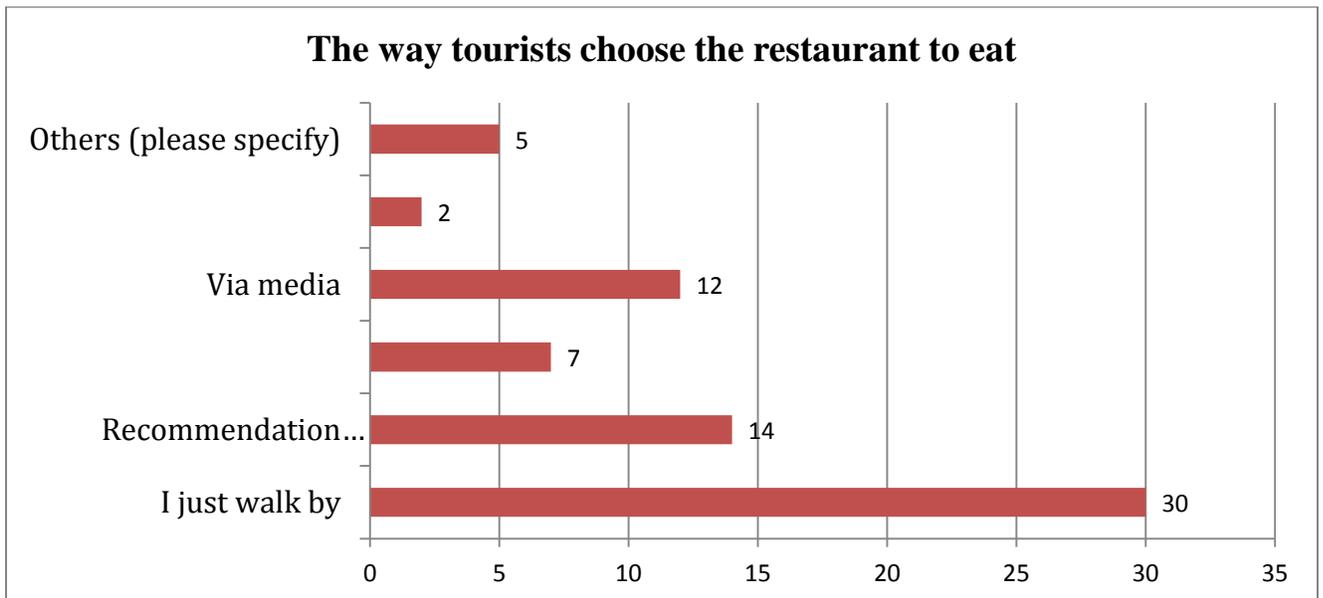
Looking at the detail, with the standard deviation ranging from 1,104 to 1,195, the five criteria - local product ingredients, local chef team, traditional eating style, local design decoration and local serving staff - were which had the most various impact level on each tourist-mind. Eighty-five responds varied throughout dimension, proving that with different visitors, the opinions for those seven keys were strongly divergent. On the other hand, tourist' point of view toward the importance level for "The restaurants provide local food" and "Traditional recipe" were less diverse than the other, with the standard deviation constituting for 0,984 and 0,988 respectively. However, on the whole, it seemed that for different tourists, the perspectives toward different authenticity criteria were strongly varied.

**Question 6: Is this your first time to this restaurant?**



Illustrated in the pie chart above are the numbers of visitor who have and have not experienced the service of the restaurant before. It can be clearly seen that the percentage of the answer “yes” was much larger than that of people who said they had been to this diner. Looking at the details, there was about 73 percent visitors who have not been to this place, while there was only a quarter of 86 respondents showing the opposite option. Overall, this was the first purchasing decision at these restaurants for the majority of tourists.

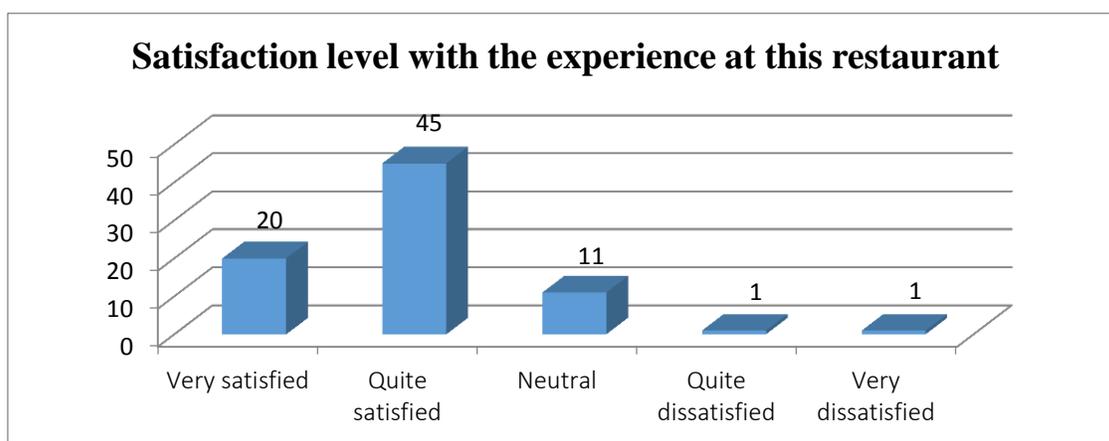
**Question 7: How did you choose this restaurant to eat?**



The bar chart given shows opinions about how tourists choose restaurant to eat. The number of tourists visiting restaurant via promotional event, recommendation by other tourists and other

forms (mostly from services provided by their hotels) was noticeably low, ranging from 2 to 7 responds. In contrast, media, local people’s recommendation and random encounter were more popular among tourists, in which “I just walking by” was mostly chosen by the majority, around 30 visitors. It is noticeable that most tourists would base on convenient approach to choose restaurant without searching.

**Question 8: How are you satisfied with the experience at this restaurant?**



When asked about the level of satisfaction at the restaurant they had chosen, nearly one-fourth out of 85 responders said that they were very satisfied with the food and services. Meanwhile, the feeling of quite satisfaction was the most outstanding, resulting in one-half of all agreements. Another 11 answers fell on neutral, meaning that they felt everything normally acceptable and not much special. Just 2 of all responds showed that they were quite, and even very dissatisfied. However, these figures contributed a quite small percentage. In overall, the statistic reflects that local restaurants in Chiang Mai receive a positive appreciation from their customers.

**Question 9: What mark from 1 to 0 would you give for the level of authenticity of this restaurant**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Quite agree	2	2,4
	No idea	1	1,2
	Quite disagree	1	1,2
	Strongly disagree	3	3,5
	6	1	1,2
	7	13	15,3
	8	21	24,7
	9	9	10,6
	10	6	7,1
	Total	57	67,1
Missing System	28	32,9	
Total	85	100,0	

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
mark from 1 to 10 for the level of authenticity of this restaurant	57	2	10	7,58	1,792

Move to the marking section, in nearly 60 valid responds, the point 8 was mentioned the most, agreed by nearly one-fourth responders. As we can see clearly from the second table, the lowest point noted was 2 and also the maximize point 10 was considered. Overall, restaurants in Chiang Mai deserved point 7.58 in average.

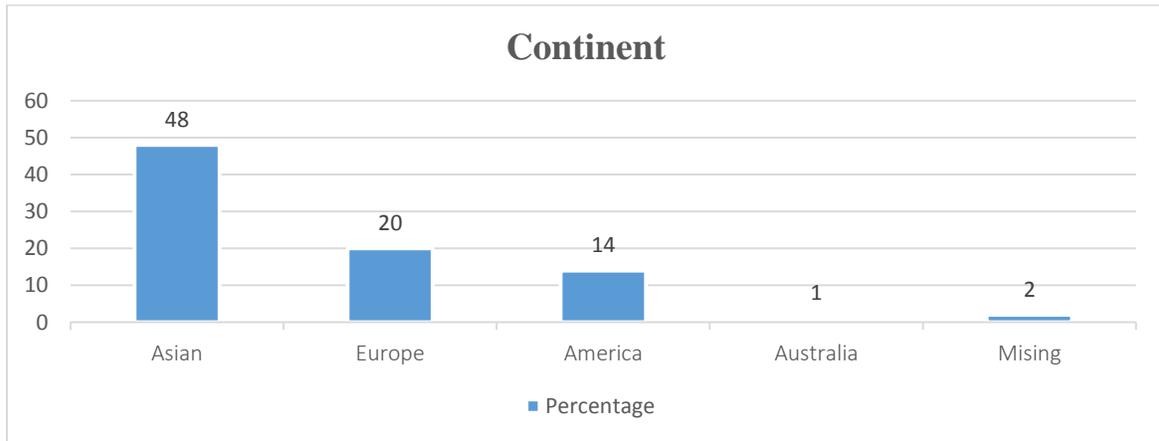
**Question 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this restaurant?**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The restaurants provide local food	83	1	5	2,23	1,097
Local products ingredients	83	1	5	2,28	,901
Traditional recipe	82	1	5	2,56	,970
Traditional eating style	82	1	5	2,77	,985
Local serving staff	83	1	5	2,13	1,009
Local chef team	82	1	5	2,17	,979
Local design decoration	82	1	5	2,55	1,219

The figure shows us the level of agreement in each aspect of the restaurant, ranging from mark 1 to 5 and corresponding from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The average point for each statement was just between 2 and 3, approving that the level of agreement fell between quite agree and no ideas. We mentioned about its food, ingredients, recipe, eating style, human factor as well as the design decoration. Among them, the factor related to eating style represented the largest recognition with 2.77 point, which meant the foreigners cared for Thai eating custom the most and wanted to make some comparisons to theirs. However, mark for local serving staff was only 2.13, the lowest point. It seems that this factor received more tolerant, and customers still felt satisfied even when the staff's serving was not perfect.

Another point we can draw from this table is that the factors related to providing the local food, staff and design decoration all had high standard deviation (bigger than 1.0), which means in these factors, tourists share much difference in their chosen answers.

**Question 11: Where are you from?**



The table lists out the countries where responders come from. It can be seen clearly that Asian countries were named the most. Typically, the domestic Thai people marked up nearly 25 percent of the total while another 15 percent were China. We also saw names of other countries nearby such as Lao, Indonesia, and some far further Japan, Korea. Together, they all took up more than half of the tourists in this survey, showing the remarkable tourism image of Thailand in Asian tourism perception. Besides, other tourists from Europe such as Netherland, Holand, together contributed one-fourth of all the responders. An interesting fact is that the American only (representing for all America Continent) marked up the same as China with nearly 15 percent. Other continents had several representatives, but quite small one. From these figures, we learnt that Thailand is truly one of the hot pubs in Asian.

**Question 12 + 13 + 14: Demographic Factors**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency (people)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b><i>Gender</i></b>		
Male	31	36,5
Female	51	60
<b><i>Age</i></b>		
<=15	3	3,5
16 – 19	11	12,9
20 – 29	46	54,1
30 – 39	9	10,6
40 – 49	4	4,7
50 – 59	5	5,9
>=60	5	5,9
<b><i>Level of Education Qualification</i></b>		
Primary School	2	2,4
Secondary School	8	9,4
Vocational Education	4	4,7
Bachelor Degree	52	61,2
Master or Doctoral Degree	13	15,3
Others	4	4,7

For other demographic factors, we can see that the number of female is twice time as that of male. Most of tourists were in the age from 16 to less than 40 years old. However, young people at the age of 20 – 29 took more than half of total. A large number of tourist had quite high level of educational qualification, with 60 percent had bachelor degree, another 15 percent had master or doctoral degree.

### 3. Other Findings

#### 3.1. Relationship Between Authenticity And Demographic Factors

##### ➤ Correlations

		Gender	Age group	Highest level of educational qualification	The importance of the authenticity
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-,249*	,059	-,010
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,024	,596	,932
	N	82	82	82	82
Age group	Pearson Correlation	-,249*	1	,281*	-,044
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,024		,010	,696
	N	82	83	83	83
Highest level of educational qualification	Pearson Correlation	,059	,281*	1	-,224*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,596	,010		,042
	N	82	83	83	83
The importance of the authenticity/locality of place to eat	Pearson Correlation	-,010	-,044	-,224*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,932	,696	,042	
	N	82	83	83	85

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

To find out the relationship between demographic factors to the importance of the authenticity/locality of the place to it, we run the correlation test (shown in the above table). Of all the three factors under consideration, we only see the relationship between level of educational qualification and the importance of the authenticity where significant is at 0.042

smaller than 0.05 in theory of Pearson. It indicates that people at different level of education have their own idea toward the authenticity and consider it in their choice of restaurant.

➤ **Group Statistics**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The importance of the authenticity/locality of place to eat	male	31	2.19	.792	.142
	female	51	2.18	.932	.130

➤ **Independent Samples Test**

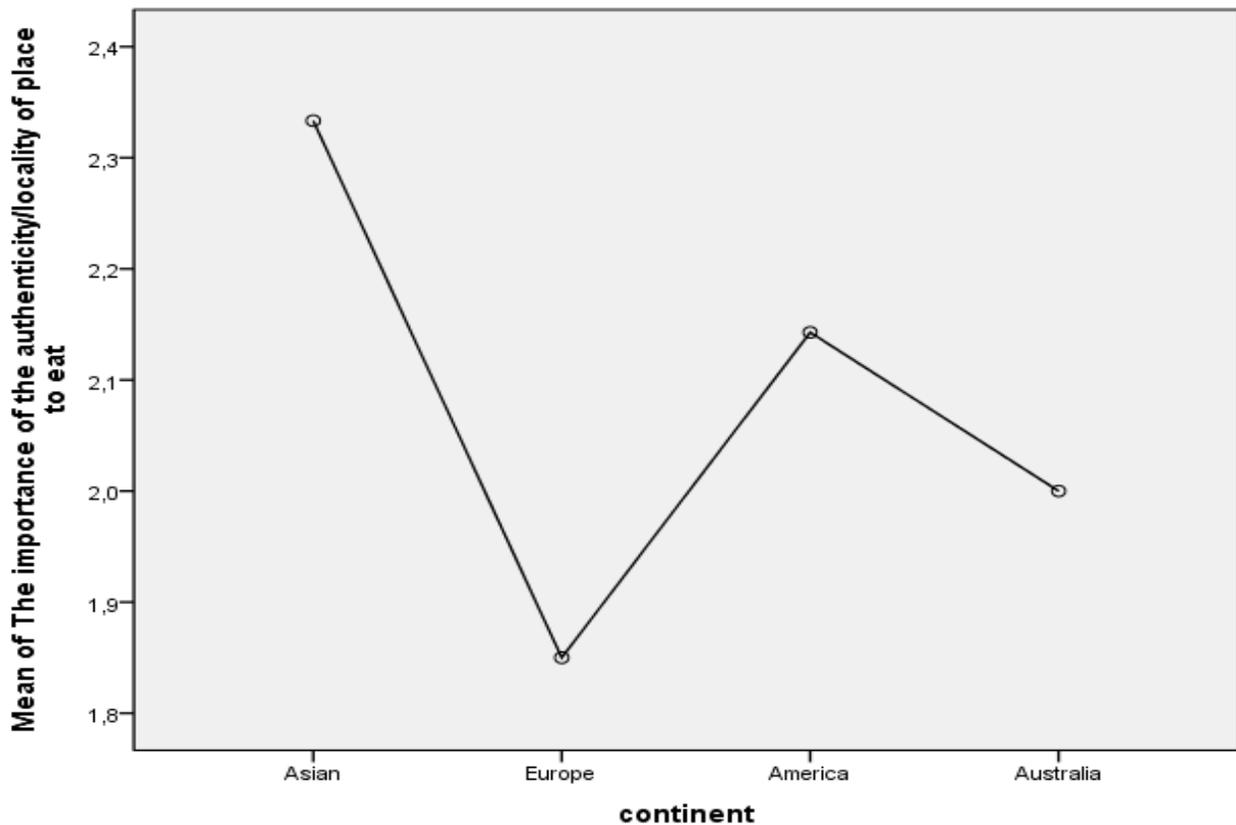
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
The importance of the authenticity/locality of place to eat	.846	.360	.085	80	.932	.017	.201	-.383	.417	
Equal variances assumed			.088	71.369	.930	.017	.193	-.368	.402	

To see whether there is a difference between the male and female in the attitude toward the importance of authenticity in choosing restaurant, T-test has been run. First of all, the significant in Levene's Test for **Equality of Variances** is 0.360, greater than 0.05. Therefore, results in row **Equal variances assumed** will be used. Next, in t-test for Equality of Means, the significant (2-tailed) is 0.932, greater than the meaningful level 0.05. We go to the conclusion that there is not enough evidence to confirm the fact that male and female are different in their consideration for

authenticity before picking up any restaurant. As a result, we need another test to find out any connection and conclusion from the figure.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.358	3	1.119	1.501	.221
Within Groups	58.931	79	.746		
Total	62.289	82			

So as to observe whether demographic affected to the level of authenticity concern or not, One way Anova (SPSS) was run effectively to come up with the above table. Since the significant level between two groups (0.221) is greater than 0.05, a conclusion was drawn that there was a meaningful difference but not much significant between tourist's geographic location and their interest in local community matters.

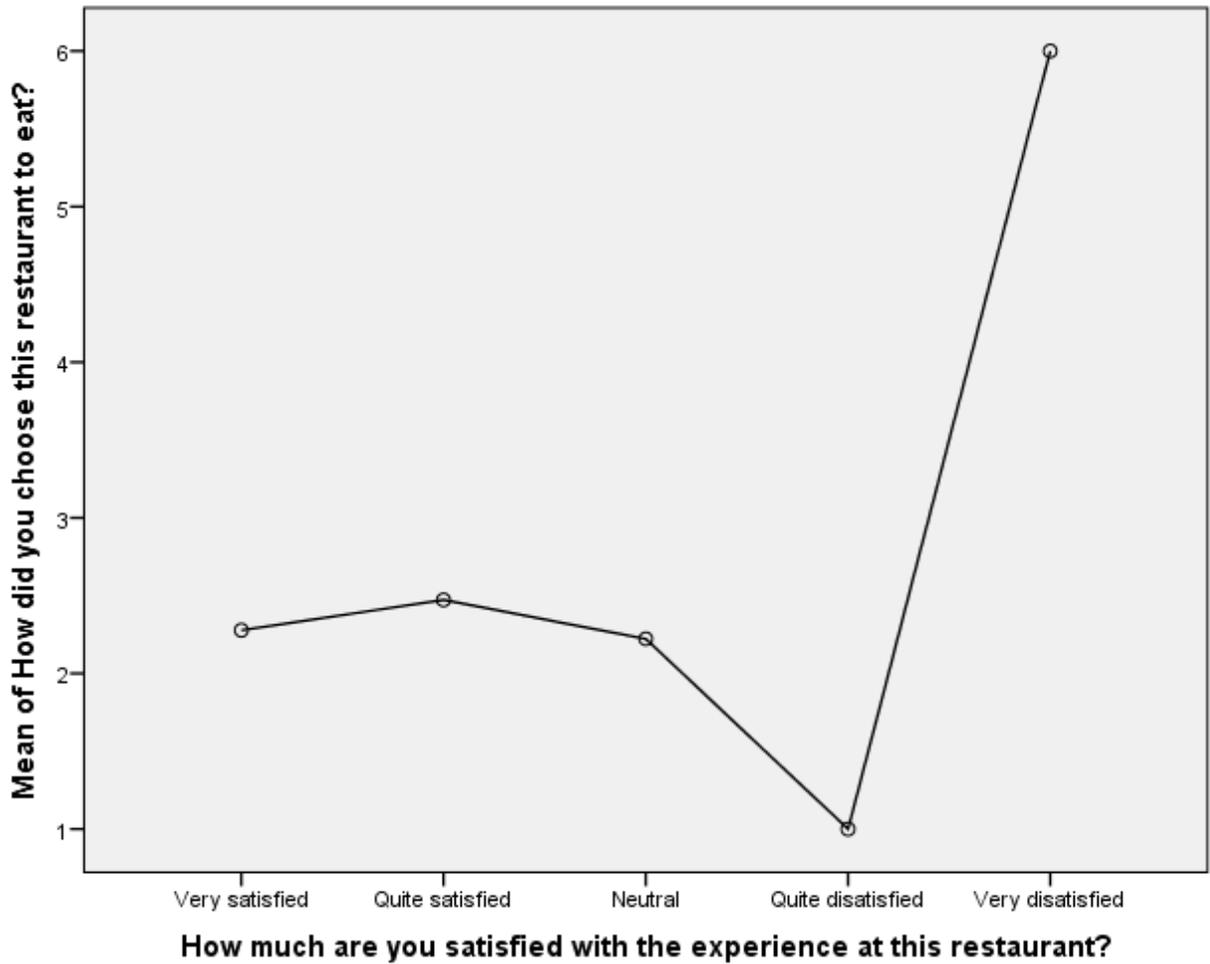


The line graph above presents the different level of authenticity attention among different continents of respondents in Chiang Mai. Based on the scale from 1 to 5 represented from "very important" to "no important", a conviction could be made that those tourists coming from Europe were likely to pay the most attention to the authenticity of their chosen restaurant, following were Australia, America and the finally, the least one, Asia. On the whole, it was likely that Asian countries didn't show as much attention toward authenticity as Eastern countries.

**3.2. Relationship Between Satisfaction Level And Means of Choosing Restaurants**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15.646	4	3.911	1.584	.190
Within Groups	148.139	60	2.469		
Total	163.785	64			

The same method was continuously used in order to identify whether there is any relationship between tourists' selecting restaurant approach and their satisfaction level after purchasing service in that restaurant. Similarity, with the significant level lying at 0.190 (>0.05), a meaningful but not much significant difference between "How did you choose this restaurant to eat?" and "How much are you satisfied with the experience at this restaurant?" could be concluded.



Illustrated in the line graph above is the different level of tourists' satisfaction in relation to their selecting restaurant decision. It could be seen that the most satisfied groups were those visiting the restaurant through recommendation of local people or friends and relative. In contrast, negative satisfaction level was detected with those who visiting randomly a food store during the journey and especially for those having meals served by their own hotels, assuming that they were very disappointed. In conclusion, the statistic reflected that recommendation from local people, family and friends were the most reliable sources, providing better experience and satisfaction.

### **III. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Based on the data collected during Chiang Mai's field trip and our observation from figure, we realize that authenticity is expressed successfully in different ways and plays an important role in influencing tourists' experience as well as their satisfaction.

Firstly, restaurants in Chiang Mai smartly design and infuse its tradition through decoration style and the way of serving. Tourists see obviously Thailand's main spirit in every picture about elephant and fairy tale, or even lamps, porcelain plates holding spice in shape of elephant which are placed beautifully on the table or in every corner. The light together with music creates such a traditional atmosphere which leads any tourist to the world of small Thailand. Beside visual ways of feeling authenticity, local food with local spicy ingredients, recipe inside and the way local people serve are other touching hints to show the local factors. Tourists are easy to feel these factors so they mostly note point 2 as "quite agree" when sharing their opinions about local authenticity in local restaurants.

Secondly, tourists also care much about restaurant's authenticity, which can be seen clearly through the number 70 percentage saying that authenticity is "quite important" or "totally important" to them. We have found out that tourists coming from European countries pay the most attention to authenticity, especially those from Netherland, Scotland or Switzerland. Meanwhile, Asian tourists (such as Chinese, Laos, Thailand or Malaysian) express less attention.

### **IV. IMPLICATIONS**

Overall, restaurants in Chiang Mai have done their best in bringing the best service to tourists. However, there is still a tiny problem if improved, tourists can be much happier when experiencing. It is the fact that most people serving in restaurants can not communicate in English, including owners, waiters or waitresses. Therefore, when tourists walk in restaurant, they have to use verbal gestures to describe what they want such as the dishes they choose or calling for help if wanting other spice. It sometimes creates some problems or inconveniences. For instance, the servant is not able to describe different levels of spicy in each dish or various ingredients included when the guests are interested in and have wonders. Therefore, if local people know a little bit simple English to communicate, then guests will understand more about the dish and enjoy their meals.

## **PART 4. PROJECT EVALUATION AND LIMITATIONS**

The project was conducted with the aim of illustrating some facts about the management of restaurants in term of locality and authenticity in Chiang Mai. Even though the process of collecting information and calculating was relatively careful, some limitations are unavoidable.

Firstly, time limitation is our most considerable problem. Due to the lack of time, we could only get information on a small scale with the sample size of tourists. This sample size may not cover the best opinion of tourists towards restaurant's level of authenticity service.

Secondly, attitudes of students involving in the survey is one of the limitation affected to the result. During the processing of collecting information, questions which requires tourists to name some dishes that they had were often skipped. Moreover, there were so many groups from the other countries working on their project at the same time; therefore, many tourists felt uninterested in spending time completing those questionnaires.

Lastly, we also find some difficulties in processing the input conducted from the questionnaire. Hardly were all of the hard copy are qualified enough to analyze due to the fact that they may skip some of the questions or misunderstand our requirement, leading to missing value.

## APPENDIX

### SURVEY ON CHOICE OF LOCAL RESTAURANTS

*Hello, we are students from Hanoi University of Vietnam, conducting a research aiming to explore the role of authenticity and locality in restaurant management. This survey questionnaire is designed to find out how the locality influences on your choice of where to eat when travelling to this destination. We would highly appreciate your 10 minutes of doing this survey.*

*Your provided information will be anonymous and not used for any other purposes except this research. Thank you very much for your cooperation!*

**1. Is this your first trip to this destination?**       Yes       No

**2. How long do you spend in this destination?**

Within the day       2-3 days       4 -5 days       More than 5 days

**3. Can you name some local food of the destination?**

---

**4. When you choose a place to eat during your trip, how important is the authenticity/locality of the destination for your choice?**

Very important     Quite important     Neutral     Not very important     No important

**5. How important are the following criteria toward your choice of a place to eat during your trip?**

Criteria	Level of importance				
	Very important	Quite important	Neutral	Not very important	Not important at all
The restaurants provide local food	1	2	3	4	5
The ingredients used by the restaurants are local products	1	2	3	4	5
The recipe is kept similar to traditions	1	2	3	4	5
The eating style is kept similar to traditions	1	2	3	4	5
The serving staff of the restaurants are local people	1	2	3	4	5
The chef team are local people	1	2	3	4	5
The decoration of the restaurant is local design	1	2	3	4	5

6. Is this your first time to this restaurant?  Yes  No

7. How did you choose this restaurant to eat?

- I just walk by  
 Recommendation by local people  
 Recommendation by other tourists  
 Via media  
 Via promotions of the restaurant  
 Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. How much are you satisfied with the experience at this restaurant?

- Very satisfied  Quite satisfied  Neutral  Quite dissatisfied  Very dissatisfied

9. What mark from 1 to 10 would you give for the level of authenticity of this restaurant?  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this restaurant?

Criteria	Level of agreement				
	Strongly agree	Quite agree	No ideas	Quite disagree	Strongly disagree
The restaurant provide truely local food	1	2	3	4	5
The ingredients used by the restaurant are local products	1	2	3	4	5
The recipe is kept similar to traditions	1	2	3	4	5
The eating style is kept similar to traditions	1	2	3	4	5
The serving staff of the restaurant are local people	1	2	3	4	5
The chef team are local people	1	2	3	4	5
The decoration of the restaurant is local design	1	2	3	4	5

11. Where are you from? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Please indicate your gender:  Male  Female

13. Please indicate your age group

- 15 or younger  20-29  40-49  60 or over

16-19                       30-39                       50-59

**14. What is your highest level of educational qualification?**

- Primary school                       Bachelor degree  
 Secondary school                       Master or Doctoral degree  
 Vocational education                       Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your time!*

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